

April 20, 2007

TO THE MISSISSIPPI STATE SENATE

GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE FOR SENATE BILL 2760

I am returning Senate Bill Number 2760: "AN ACT TO REQUIRE MUNICIPALITIES TO PROVIDE A PREDISCIPLINARY HEARING PRIOR TO THE SUSPENSION OR TERMINATION OF ANY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER; TO ESTABLISH A MINIMUM LEVEL OF WRITTEN DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES; TO SPECIFY WHAT NOTICE SHALL BE PROVIDED TO THE OFFICER; TO PROVIDE THAT THE OFFICER MAY ATTEND THE HEARING, MAY BE REPRESENTED BY COUNSEL, MAY PRESENT EVIDENCE ON HIS OWN BEHALF AND QUESTION WITNESSES; TO PROVIDE THAT THE EVIDENTIARY PHASE OF THE HEARING MAY BE HELD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION; TO PROVIDE THAT FINAL ADJUDICATION SHALL BE HELD IN OPEN MEETING; TO EXEMPT MUNICIPALITIES THAT HAVE A CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION OR DUE PROCESS POLICY; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES" without my approval, and assign the following reasons for my veto.

After full consideration, I am vetoing Senate Bill 2760, which would establish new personnel procedures for police departments throughout the state and impose a new unfunded mandate on our cities. By imposing new bureaucratic rules, police chiefs throughout our state will lose their ability to effectively manage their departments. Instead of focusing on fighting crime, they will be burdened with needless paperwork and bureaucracy.

Protecting the public's safety is why government was first created. Senate Bill 2760 would make it more difficult for cities to quickly terminate law enforcement officers who are not adequately protecting our citizens. We should give our law enforcement leadership the tools and flexibility they need to fight crime and not tie their hands with needless new laws and regulations.

For these reasons, I urge the members to reject Senate Bill 2760 and sustain the veto.

Respectfully submitted,

Haley Barbour,  
GOVERNOR